Accelerated Academic Grants Awarded

Grants will allow public schools to offer advanced coursework to students

The Delaware Department of Education is pleased to announce the award recipients of its Accelerated Academic Grants, the new state program that made funds available for programs targeted at academically advanced students.

The program — created through legislation proposed last year by Lieutenant Governor Matt Denn and the chairs of the General Assembly's education committees, Sen. Dave Sokola and Rep. Darryl Scott — allows school districts to design programs targeted at students who are ahead of grade level in reading, writing, math or science.

Local school districts and schools applied for start-up grants for programs targeted at students who are at least a half year ahead of grade level based upon current state standards. Most of the programs are expected to be offered beginning in the 2014-2015 school year.

The reviewing committee selected eight awardees, with awards totaling \$246,535.70. The awardees represent each county (three in New Castle, three in Kent and two in Sussex), different grade levels and both traditional and charter schools.

The winners are:

Caesar Rodney School District \$65,422.50

■ Cape Henlopen School District \$57,623.20

■ Brandywine School District

\$23,800.00

■ POLYTECH School District

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\$30,000.00

Indian River School District

\$21,100.00

■ Las Americas ASPIRA Academy \$17,576.00

■ Capital School District \$16,740.00

Newark Charter High School \$14,274.00

TOTAL \$246,535.70

An additional \$53,464.30 will be available under a second round of applications early next year.

"I am pleased to see the widespread interest in these grants and very impressed with proposals that will allow more of our advanced public school children to be challenged in the classroom," Lt. Governor Matt Denn said. "There is a real demand among our public school parents for programs like these, and I hope to see even more of them in the future."

Secretary of Education Mark Murphy said educators working closest to our students know best how to meet their needs: "That is why we are pleased to be able to support these local program ideas that, thanks to these grants, will allow accelerated learning for students who are eager for these types of new challenges."

More detail on the winners follow:

- Caesar Rodney School District: The district will use a STEM project approach pullout program in its middle schools with a blended learning opportunity to enhance the learning as well as providing accelerated opportunities using computer programs and tablets for accelerated students in the related arts.
- Cape Henlopen School District: The district will implement a progressive, rigorous approach in accelerated education through STEAM enriched instruction. The program will include 60 identified 5th grade students from four elementary schools and will inspire creativity, innovation and integrative problem solving above and beyond the curriculum.

- Brandywine School District: This vertically-designed program expands opportunities for high school students, offered as a STEM cluster of critical courses, but matched with arts and humanities.
- POLYTECH School District: This funding will allow POLYTECH to expand its AP services for students including online courses and more topics of study.
- Indian River School District: The BRITE (Bringing Intellectual Talents Everyday) Project's purpose is to provide professional development for teachers and administrators' implementation of the SpringBoard program with honors level students. SpringBoard curriculua are designed to build a pathway in grades 6-10 towards AP competency in later grades.
- Las Americas ASPIRA Academy: ASPIRA will implement the QUEST (Quality Utilization and Enrichment of Student Talents) Program that will be focused on developing students' critical, creative and logical thinking skills as well as problem-solving abilities.
- Capital School District: This funding will permit William Henry Middle School to implement Making Math Matter to identify 5th and 6th grade students from underrepresented groups with the potential for success in advanced math classes and prepare them to qualify for and pass Algebra I in seventh grade.
- Newark Charter High School: NCHS just opened for 9th grade and is planning for grades 10 to 12. This grant will allow the school to offer a wide variety of AP coursework for students capable of accelerated learning.